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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period June 2021

Released 2/09/2021

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Key statistics

In the June quarter 2021

- 36 disputes occurred.
- 6,400 employees were involved and 10,400 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 7 industries and in 6 states and territories.

During the year ended June 2021, there were 100 disputes and a total of 57,700 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	March 2021	June 2021	June 2020	June 2021
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	22	30	94	98
Total (no.)	24	36	102	100
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	2.3	6.0	28.8	14.7
Total ('000)	2.7	6.4	29.6	14.8
Working days lost ('000)	19.2	10.4	35.6	57.7

Overview

In the June quarter 2021, there were:

- 36 disputes, 12 more than from the previous quarter.
- 6,400 employees involved, an increase from 2,700 in the previous quarter.
- 10,400 working days lost, a decrease from 19,200 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 100 disputes occurred, 2 less than in the previous year.
- 57,700 working days were lost, 62% more than the previous year.

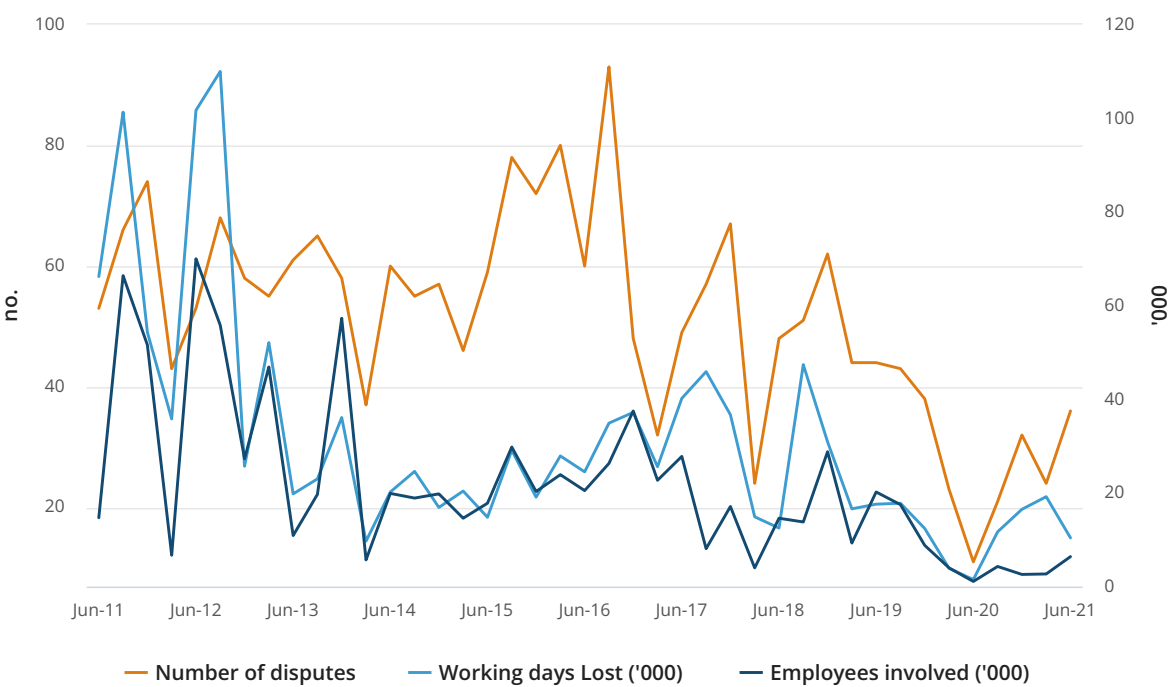
1 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		
	Commenced in period	Total	Newly involved	Total	Working days lost
	no.	no.	'000	'000	'000
June Quarter 2019	34	44	18.8	20.2	17.6
September Quarter 2019	35	43	16.8	17.5	17.8
December Quarter 2019	34	38	8.3	8.8	12.4
March Quarter 2020	17	23	2.9	4.0	3.9
June Quarter 2020	8	11	0.9	1.1	1.5
September Quarter 2020	19	21	4.2	4.3	11.7
December Quarter 2020	27	32	2.2	2.6	16.5
March Quarter 2021	22	24	2.3	2.7	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36	6.0	6.4	10.4

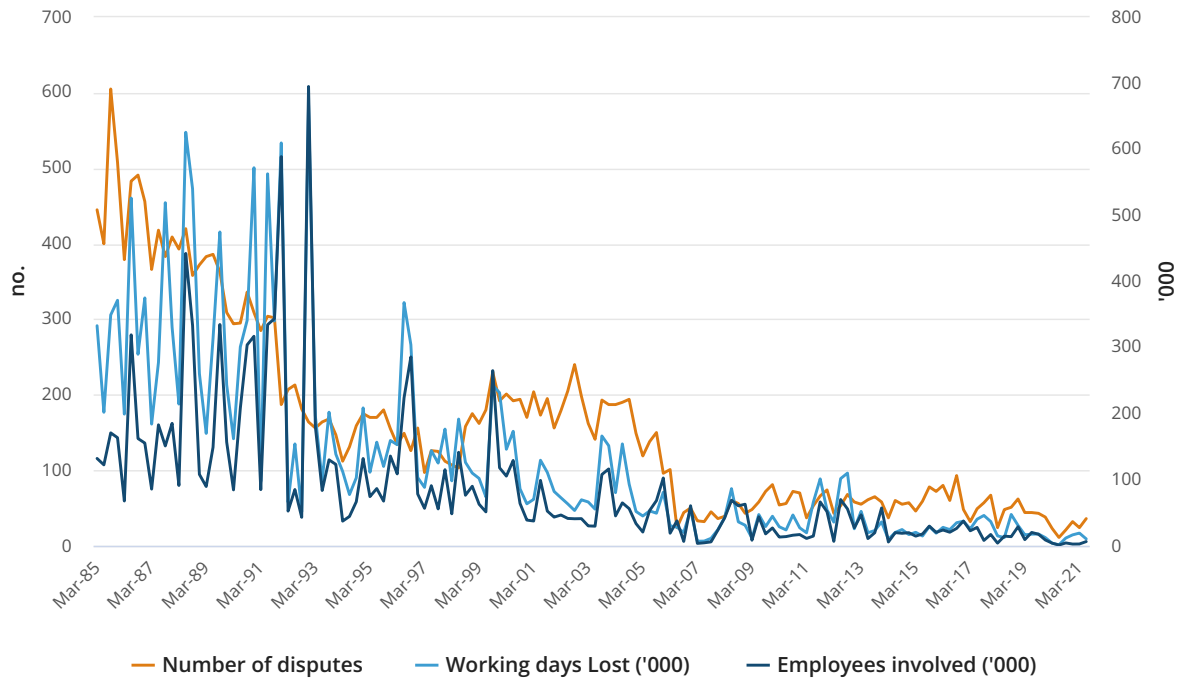
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the June quarter, disputes occurred in seven industries. More than three in ten (31%) working days lost were in Other industries.

2 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	March Quarter 2021		June Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
Mining				
Coal mining	1.7	34.6	0.7	15.2
Other mining	-	0.1	-	-
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	-	-	1.0	3.1
Other manufacturing	1.8	3.5	1.9	3.4
Construction	1.3	1.4	2.8	3.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	13.1	21.8	0.7	1.3
Education and training; Health care and social assistance	-	-	0.2	0.1
Other industries (a)	1.2	0.2	3.2	0.5
All industries	19.2	1.6	10.4	0.9

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

a. See [Glossary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary) - Industry - for details of industries included.

States and territories

Disputes occurred in six states and territories in the June quarter, with more than three in ten (39%) working days lost occurring in Western Australia.

3 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	March Quarter 2021		June Quarter 2021	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
NSW	15.8	4.3	2.5	0.7
Vic.	1.9	0.6	1.2	0.4
Qld	0.6	0.2	1.7	0.7
SA	np	np	1.0	1.3
WA	0.8	0.6	4.0	3.1
Tas.	-	-	-	-
NT	np	np	-	-
ACT	-	-	-	-
Australia	19.2	1.6	10.4	0.9

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 50% of disputes (9 of 18) which ended in the March quarter 2021.

4 Cause of disputes which ended during the quarter

December Quarter 2020				March Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	8	0.3	1.4	2	np	np
Employment conditions (EB)	12	2.8	7.3	7	0.7	24.9
Other EB related	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	1	-	-	1	np	np
Employment conditions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health and safety	5	0.4	0.4	4	1.1	1.4
Job security	1	0.3	-	1	np	np
Managerial policy	1	np	np	2	0.2	0.1
Union issues	1	np	np	1	np	np
Other Non EB related	1	np	np	-	-	-
Total	30	4.3	9.7	18	2.3	26.8

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 18 disputes which ended in the March quarter, 13 lasted for 2 days or less.

5 Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	December Quarter 2020			March Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Up to and including 1 day	12	1.3	0.8	7	np	np
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	6	1.0	1.3	6	0.8	1.4
Over 2 and less than 5 days	6	1.7	4.2	2	np	np
5 and less than 10 days	3	0.3	2.4	2	0.1	0.8
10 days and over	3	0.1	1.0	1	0.4	23.8
Total	30	4.3	9.7	18	2.3	26.8

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Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

Negotiation without intervention of a third party and Pre-determined return to work each accounted for 33% of disputes (6 of 18) which ended in the March quarter 2021.

6 Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	December Quarter 2020			March Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	5	0.4	2.3	6	1	24.4
State legislation	1	np	np	-	-	-
Federal legislation	1	0.6	0.8	4	0.4	0.3
Pre-determined return to work	17	2.5	5.9	6	0.3	1.1
Resumption without negotiation	6	np	np	1	-	-
Mediation	-	-	-	1	0.5	1.1
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	30	4.3	9.7	18	2.3	26.8

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

[Download all \(436.19 KB\)](#)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

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[86.5 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

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[106 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

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[104 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

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[154 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

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[143.5 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

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[353.5 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

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[154.5 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

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[268.5 KB]

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, June 2021](#)